

December 23, 2003

AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY ALERT, Number 20

Informing you about news, events, data releases, congressional actions and other developments associated with the American Community Survey (ACS).

NEWS IN THIS ALERT:

- ACS Voluntary Test Results Made Public
 - ACS 2000-2001 CD-ROMs Still Available
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ACS Voluntary Test Results Made Public

The U.S. Census Bureau, which recently briefed the U.S. Congress on the results of its American Community Survey (ACS) voluntary test conducted between March and June of this year, made the results public today.

The test was designed to determine the impact of a voluntary ACS on mail response, survey quality and costs. Census Bureau staff worked closely with the staff of the Technology, Information Policy, Intergovernmental Relations and Census Subcommittee and the House Government Reform Committee to implement the test.

Here are seven key findings of the voluntary test:

- A dramatic decrease occurred in mail response when the survey became voluntary.
- The reliability of estimates was adversely affected by the reduction in the total number of completed interviews.
- The decreased cooperation across all three modes of data collection (mail, telephone and personal visit) resulted in a noteworthy, but not critical, drop in weighted survey response.
- Levels of item nonresponse for the data collected under voluntary and mandatory methods were very similar.
- The use of voluntary methods had a negative impact on traditionally low response areas.
- The change to voluntary had the greatest impact on areas that have traditionally high levels of cooperation and on White and non-Hispanic households.

- The estimated annual cost of implementing the ACS would increase by at least \$59.2 million if the survey were voluntary.

The report, *Meeting 21st Century Demographic Data Needs--Implementing the American Community Survey, Report 3: Testing the Use of Voluntary Methods*, is attached.

ACS 2000-2001 CD-ROMs Still Available

The CD-ROM containing the 2000-2001 ACS data is still available free of charge from the Census Bureau. Call (301)763-INFO (4636) to order.

The ACS data for a sample of more than 700,000 households surveyed in the 2000 and 2001 supplementary surveys are included on the CD-ROM, as well as the data for the 31 American Community Survey test sites.

The ACS is a key component in the Census Bureau's re-engineered 2010 census, which also consists of early planning and modernization of geographic operations.

CONTACT US

If you have questions or comments about the American Community Survey, please call (888) 456-7215 or e-mail <cmo.acs@census.gov>.

General information about this mailing list is available at
<<http://lists.census.gov/mailman/listinfo/acs-alet>>.

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